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ABSTRACT

This project researched theoretical self-study, i.e., how to improve, support, and facilitate the ability of a student teacher to learn to reflect on his/her learning and development through large (n=80) and small (n=5-8) group work and supervision where the basic idea is to foster professional growth of the student teacher. In the supervision model (n=10), fourth year students were asked to answer questions about close cooperation in supervision in regard to their most important goals, the nature of the instructor-student interaction, the quality of feedback discussion, their consciousness of practical theory, and their most significant learning experience. It was found that a small group could not function when its members had just been selected; it needed a group leader to function. The large group offered a means to teach indirectly. The guidance situation in a supervisory situation had to be created. The main task of a supervisor was to facilitate and enrich the phase of student's reflection as close cooperation encouraged student teachers to draw on their own expertise. Individual professional growth could not be consciously designed, nor could the critical points be assessed beforehand. Professional development will start spontaneously in the student teacher when obstacles are removed. (Contains 16 references.) (CK)

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ED 398 199

TO CREATE A CONTEXT OF REFLECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

A Pilot Research

Presentation at ECER 95
European Conference on Educational Research
14-17 September, 1995
University of Bath, England

1. INTRODUCTION

The turning point in research is in qualitative shift of perspective. Ben-Perez (1986) proposed abonding of a too narrow concept of teachers' cognitive processes instead of a wide range of experiences, beliefs and knowledge which is beyond decisions. As a result we have considerable insights into the personal and complex nature of feelings (Calderhead 1993, Cole 1995).

At the turn of the 1980's	Teacher thinking & action separate entities. Intensive analysis of thought.
Later in the 1980's	Understanding of teaching through interaction of thought & decision making. Information process, purely psychological.
At the turn of the 1990's	Thinking became more phenomenological in nature, more integrated in thought and action. Implicit subjective theories. The acceptance of the idea of knowledge residing in practice.
1990 -----> (field)	Teachers are encouraged to inquire and to reflect. A move from purely cognitive explanations towards holistic conceptualization and exploration of wide experiences, beliefs through reflection, the taking into account of the personal & contextual nature of teaching.

Figure 1 Teacher thinking

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2. THEORY BASIS

Despite recent efforts, such as action research, "teacher researcher" and other teacher empowerment" initiatives, teachers have little real control over their work (Cole, 1995). The situation is improving all the time, e.g. in Finland there is the movement of Teacher as Researcher. In the context of formalized professional development teachers have had little control and it has been assigned little value by anyone else except for teachers and in some modern Teacher Education curriculum, where professional learning process is focused on (Ojanen, 1992). All over schools are still lonely and anxious places for adults to work in, which creates a real obstacle to get teachers to reflect their work. As Hargreaves (1990) and Neilsen (1994) point out, the school culture does not support the professional community or help teachers to be reflective practitioners. Neither teachers nor researchers have had much to say about what goes in schools (Thiessen, 1993).

On the other hand, we know how Dewey and later Jersild (1955) raised the personal significance how the self of a teacher, the citadel of one's being and worth and strong hold from which one moves to face himself in order to further his own growth.

2.1. Examination of background theories

According to psychoanalytical thinking the individual's experience is always **subjective**. Everyone has their own unique experience. It has been noticed in psychoanalytical research that an individual interprets his/her outer world through his/her inner world. The inner world consists of a series of previous experiences which have formed into meanings. Thus the previous experiences have an effect on how the individual in question react to new situations.

Psychoanalytical theory formation

Psychoanalytical research with its methods and theory formation creates possibilities to deepen and organize both Dewey's thinking and the concept of reflection. The special advantage of psychoanalytical research lies in areas where the means of educational theories have been insufficient. In Dewey's opinion the traditional problem in education has been the fact that although the necessary conditions for learning have been provided, the students' individual starting points and aspirations have been forgotten (Dewey, 1951, 44-55). "In an educational situation the educator should be aware of the direction into which the studying experiences, e.g. class groups, are leading the students and what sort of development they facilitate.

The experiment in question is based on experiential and psychoanalytical theory and research work (even not pedagogical), which have a long history in the study of external and internal factors affecting human growth and development and their interaction. Also Dewey's philosophical thinking bears close resemblance to the knowledge produced by psychoanalytical research and experience. Although Dewey never uses the concept 'unconscious' and does not recognize the unconscious basis of development, he has intuitively realized what the individual's inner requirements for development are. Thus psychoanalytical research has in a way verified Dewey's theory. On the other hand the similarities between Dewey's thinking and psychoanalytical thinking are not surprising, since both have their roots in the Hegelian ontology, in which the

basic idea is that experience forms a developing and holistic unity. Both theory formations share a similar philosophical basis concerning humanity.

Experiential learning

The interest towards experiential learning methods has steadily increased. According to Cole (1995) it is derived from three principal sources: social sciences, practical experiences and psychoanalytical theory basis, the latter applied e.g. to learning helps to understand the inner dynamics in groups, unconscious anxiety that all prevent the adult's psychological development and learning.

Experiential learning is nowadays gaining growing attention in the educational literature and research. However, understanding the experiential process has not become common, even in the **educational field**. Educational theorists have scarcely been viewing the role of learners' experiences in education before the 1990's. Nowadays experiential learning is seen as a methodology which encompasses critical reflection and enables learners to make sense of their own experiences (Saddington, 1991). To be able to do this, learners need to develop skills of inquiry which will enable them to reinterpret their experiences. Experiential learning should be a process in which experience is reflected upon and then translated into concepts, which in turn become guidelines for new experiences (Boud et al 1985).

2.2. Professional Growth Program according to Fessler & Burke's model

The need for the quality of professional growth program has emerged in 1980's. The program of Fessler & Burke has is based on and flows from the teachers' needs. It emphasizes that agreement between student teachers and supervisors should result in program appropriateness and positive professional growth, even if it is not specifically based on both of the previously presented frameworks.

In the following (figure 2) will be presented this model, where the central factor is the relationship between the student teacher's actual growth needs and professional growth program. In this pilot research the model in question is critically evaluated (see findings and conclusion), and after that methodologically modelized.

Still missing is a unifying theoretical framework to draw activities or techniques together into a model for personalized supervisory attention so that an individual professional growth plan can be designed (Fessler et al, 1983). According to Fessler et Burke the supervisor is a partner with the student teacher (of which we are later using: teacher) in judging his/her growth needs and in developing a growth program to establish, maintain, or add to teacher competence. The authors propose that interaction between student teachers and supervisors can be systematized so that the actual needs of the teachers are met. Teacher growth needs (A in figure 2) must be identified by both the teacher and the supervisor. The teacher's perceptions of his or her growth needs (B) are based on selfappraisal (Segment AB), while the supervisor's perceptions (C) grow out of his or her diagnosis of the teacher's growth needs (Segment AC).

One of the challenging aspects of the supervisor-teacher relationship is the need for agreement regarding teacher growth needs (Segment BC). If the teacher does not admit to having a need, efforts to provide a program to meet the need will not be perceived as help and will likely be rejected. If the teacher does not admit to having this problem, efforts to provide a program to meet the need would not be perceived as help and vould likely be rejected. "Help not perceived as help is no help." (Fessler et al 1983)

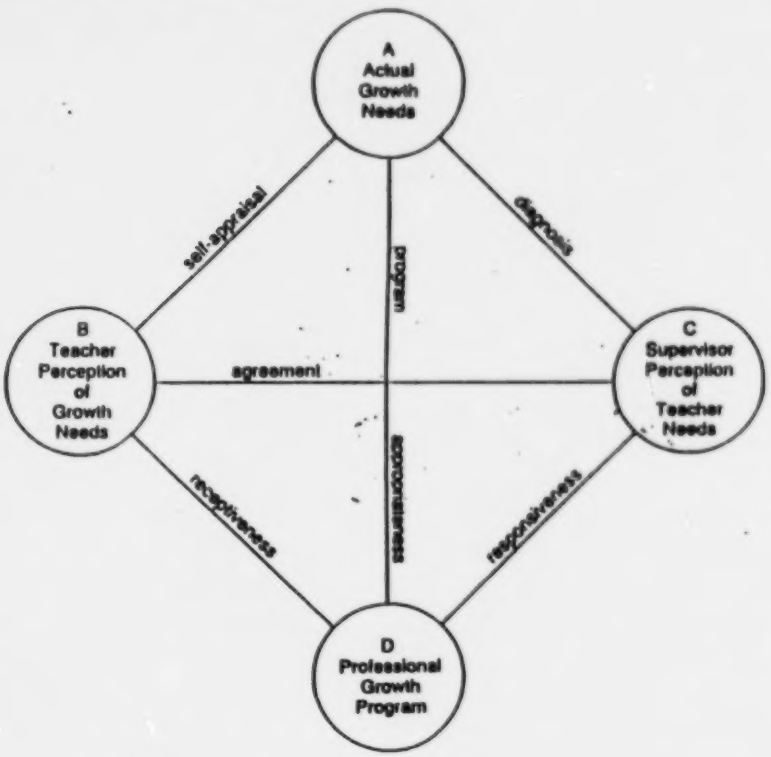

Figure 2 Fessler & Burke's model for supervision

Effective pursuit of professional growth is facilitated when the teacher and the supervisor share perceptions of teacher needs. The teacher and supervisor must engage in frequent communication, dialog, and indeed risk taking in order to approach agreement on their views of teacher growth needs.(Fessler et al 1983)

3. THE AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to make theoretical self study how to improve, support and facilitate the ability of a student teacher to learn to reflect his/her learning and development in work by means of two less quoted strategies, Large and Small Group, and supervision where the basic idea is to foster professional growth of the student teacher. We have done a pilot research on both the strategies and the supervision model, presented before.

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We hypothesize that in order to reach optimum production in Teacher Education (TE) we should learn to analyze 1) the meaning of student teachers' past experiences and 2) the context within which they carry out their professional responsibilities in training and later in the group of staff at school. Otherwise the teachers are not able to engage in reflective practice and professional development in their further development (compare Cole, 1995).

4. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The basic task of teacher educationis that student teacher learns to study his/her own doing. Teacher education should examine the applications of the curriculum (i.e. adequate methods) as well as the supervisor's intervention in order to activate the student's professional growth.

A crucial question here is: Which method or relationship really promotes and facilitates or prevents the teacher's reflection process during preservice?

Learning i.e. the dynamics of change, is prevented/ facilitated by several factors, which have been divided into A) internal and B) external:

1) ability (inner variable)
2) desire (inner variable)
3) opportunity (external variable)

A) INTERNAL VARIABLES	- finding one's own view of learning - commitment, intentionality, ability to develop and grow - openness in oneself, ability to deal with anxiety
B) EXTERNAL VARIABLES	- the use of effective teaching methods as small and large group, and understanding their idea - security of atmosphere - finding positive feedback in supervision - hindrances in the supervisor's ability to student's needs (compare Fessler model)

Figure 3 Internal and external variables affecting learning

5. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESEARCH

We have been following on a practical level the general development of a student in basic preservice training from their starting point of the education until final teaching practice.

The group method has been used for decades in different forms and it has also been extensively used for various pedagogical purposes. This does not, however, mean that the human regulations governing a successful group process would have necessarily been realized (e.g. Bion, W.,

1961). When such basic regulations have not been understood, they have, of course, not been taken into account in the planning and use of groups either university level education or anywhere else. A significant part of a group's possibilities have remained unutilized.

5.1. Method

This year course have been have been given both large and small group experiences and their process of development has been supported by aid of ohter reflective methods. As a research method there is used here Large group experiences in the first year course, in the study year 1-2 Small group experiences.

Small group is a group with 5-8 participants. In practice it includes in university teaching 8-10 participants. A small group can work more effectively than a larger one. But a small group becomes a work group only after organizing itself into one through a group work process. So the only way into a work group is via a grouping process.

Working group is a group in which the fruitful interaction between the participants furthers the work in the group. This prerequisites that there are no tensions in the group which prevent interaction. If such tensions exist, the group will loose a part of its resources or will not be able to utilize its resources to their full extent. On the individual level this means that the process of development does not proceed in an optimal fashion.The individual does not get an opportunity to familiarize himself with his creative abilities.

Large Group (e.g. the whole year course, n=80, 6 hours altogether). The basic hypothesis is that the Large Group enables the unconsciousness to burst out without delay, i.e. accelerates the opening of the students' channels of learning.

In supervision of the 4th year course was studied the students' self-analysis and their supervisors consideration. The most reflective and the least reflective (n=10) students were selected to the target group with their supervisors during the final practice teaching (6 weeks) in the 4th year course. They were asked to reply to the following questions about how the close cooperation in supervision worked.

1. Being about the middle of your teaching practice period what do you consider your most important goal/goals? Have your goal/goals changed from the earlier ones?

2. The nature of "the interaction of encounter" of instructor and student. How has, in your opinion, each party involved been able to express his/her view? In what way has your view been accepted?

3. Has the "feedback discussion" been research oriented, reflective co-conversation?

Challenging questions:

* Have you started to develop the ideas together?
* Have you inspired each others?
* Have the crucial items remained unspoken?

4. Where has the discussion, inquiry, sharing together with the instructor lead in practice? Have you become conscious of your practical theory (theories in use), which is "silent" knowledge, but which can be spoken out into words?

Challenging questions:

* Which are the reasons which make you think so? (Why do you think so?)
* Have anything changed in your way to act?

5. Which has been your most significant learning experience in this phase? Would you like to describe it? How do you see the level of your own professional development at the moment?

6. What else would you like to add, e.g. about the teaching programme?

6. FINDINGS

In the literature of promoting reflection strong focus has been laid on strategies. However it is not only necessary to employ adequate strategies through which reflective capacity and repertoire of skills can be fostered in student teachers. Much more attention should be altogether to creation of learning situations. Through them it is possible to encourage self-dialogue, to reach the turbulence process in turning old knowledge to new one. Any strategy does not help further if it is not understood, how to manage learning i.e. in creation of learning situations.

6.1. Using Small and Large Group

We found in concrete way, that a small group is not able to function at the time when its members have just been selected. A small group has to form into a work group as we did. It is the work group that can optimize the group member's common task into practice. If a person has no positive experiences of any kind of groups, the person is afraid of groups. Since teacher's work is crucially group work, it is of great importance that he/she learns group work methods during the education. Teacher educator is the leader of group work. As a group leader he/she is mainly responsible for the group's external and also internal possibilities to function. For the most part teacher observes the group's functioning, but also when necessary, acts as an authority and intervenes.

Adult students who are accustomed to orderly behaviour don't usually rebel, although the thought of rebellion is examined in the mind, how it happened in large group, where the instructor was giving instruction based on free associaton: "Your task is to clarify how an experience can serve learning. I would like you to study and express the feelings and ideas you have in mind here and now - feelings and thoughts." The urge to be nice in civilized manner means however that anxiety is easily pushed aside. Thus learning and growth did not take place and there was no reflection. Yet students, like all the other people, have a varying ability to recognize anxiety.

In learning self-reflection the student needs guidance in the beginning, in the same way as the patient is helped by the therapist towards inner analysis, particularly in the dialogue of supervison

it should be considered whether experiences that are meant to be learning situations can be educative experiences (Dewey, 1951, 29-32). To start self-reflection, there has to exist a therapeutic dissonance of the ego, where both parts of the ego, the investigating and the experiencing, co-exist. By developing this - not only for therapeutic purposes, but to serve all eductional development - the individual can develop a critical analysis of his/her experiences i.e. be a researcher and the object of research at the same time. The attitude of an analyst towards student teacher's own experiences has to be learned through guidance, to get the feel of it, how it happens.

The large group is a multi-layer structure. There it is possible to reach archaic feelings as each individual analyzes his/her own meanings in an individual way. The large group offers a chance to get deeper and always awakens strong feelings as it did here. It is also a beneficial means to teach indirectly. The learning experience is not watered down although there might be 100 people present, on the contrary! However, during one experiment only flashes, narrow strips of the personality can be reached compared to systematic therapy. This kinds of experiments can also be repeated and new things can be constantly learned because each group situation is unique and creates something new.

The basic difference between the large and small group experiences was that the student is in touch with himself/herself on different levels. The levels reached in a large group may not be reached at all in a small group or they are reached vaguely. The large group cannot offer what the small group can, so there is no competition between the effects of the group types, instead they complement each other as experiences. Neither does one reach the level reached by a therapy group over a long period of time, however, both types of group offer a possibility to examine one's own inner world through a group experience.

With students who are not at all familiar with inner analysis the feeling was "silly", It is very important to use the psychoanalytical research design and method so that they would get the feel of their own projections. As long as this feeling does not exist these people project in abundance without realizing it. This method will also benefit those who need to learn the idea of reflection and get in touch with their unconscious. The psychoanalytical view is needed educationally as well, and there should be enough practice to produce an intuitive understanding.

6.2. Supervisor's role as a mediating agent

The main task of supervisor is to facilitate and enrich the phase of student's reflection (Handal, 1987). An experienced person can be of immense help in transforming knowledge into an explicit and accessible from. It is more an idea than reality but the goal specifies the reflection promoted by strategy. Close co-operation encourages student teachers to draw up their own expertise (Pugach, 1990). The supervision of teacher practice may be a powerful dialogue but the guidance situation does not develop automatically into an in-dept discussion: it has to be created! That is why we would like to develop the research and training on the final practice period much more than happened.

Supervisor should act as mediating agent as intervertebral disk does in backbone. The teacher educator's task is to elucidate student teachers own thinking - but on their conditions!

Receiving and making sense of the new experiences in the light of old ones (personal history)

According to the experiential learning the main idea was once again supported strongly that the individual cannot learn unless he/she learns to utilize past experiences. That is to learn to use experiences. In learning it is crucially important to combine past experience with new material. Those who realized this at once in large group furthered in their growth process. Those who didn't get awareness were defending because the new in relation to the old always includes a conflict which causes anxiety. But the new cannot be accepted, if one cannot give up the old. One has to explain oneself why the old seems so important, in other words, one needs to work with resistance and to get pass it. The "encounter" of the old and the new is a "here and now" experience. This is the experience one should learn to analyze, in order to be able first of all to analyze one's own learning process.

Secondly one should learn to observe the anxiety so that it would not shift the attention away from the initial task i.e. learning. In addition to learning process one should learn very many other things as to explore one's own feelings and reflections as well as their connection to interaction. Because of the background history & experiences inform the manner in which student teachers carry out their lives and their work in classroom (Knowles & Cole, 1994). There is no sense to neglect this area.

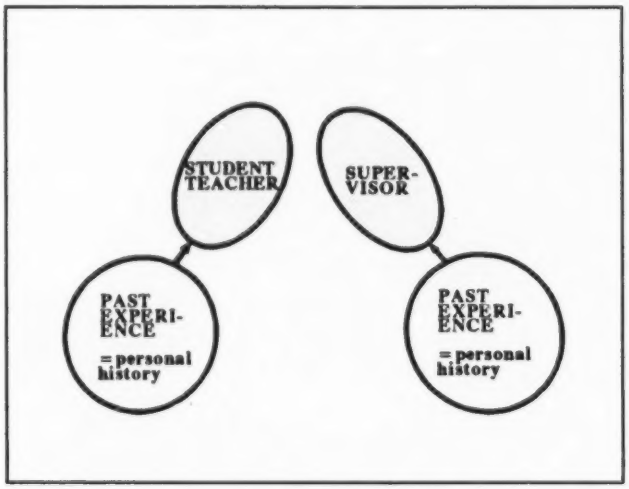

Figure 4. Different backgrounds and personal histories

We did not agree with the argument that professional growth can be designed because the subject does not see the object's history and is thus unable to act as the object does due to his different background. Life experience created us individual, persons. In this process so-called key experiences play an important role. The most important thing is to study the student's developmental history i.e. previous experiences and their effect on the tutoring relationship (figure 4).

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Fessler and Burke aim at finding a certain model on the basis of a ready-made program and moulding the student accordingly. In other words, they look for a framework about which both the student and tutor are in agreement and on the basis of which they can create in cooperation a program to reach the set goals. This is a systematically proceeding educational program that, according to our experience, has nothing to do with individual professional growth. To a certain extent one could say that Fessler and Burke's model has the wrong basis since the student and tutor can not possibly share the same images! It is humanly quite impossible. Even if the tutor and student's would reflect one another, they still would not mirror each other's images.

The danger in such models is the indoctrinating dialogue which, despite its goals, fails to describe inner growth. The above-mentioned model offers a tutoring technique lacking the understanding of the core of individual human growth.

If human development is unconscious, i.e. based on self-evidences, and the basic philosophy is based on indoctrination (=the student should learn this), also the teaching of the tutoring technique is indoctrinating - not based on critical study of the student and his/her background.

In the discussion between the tutor and the student it became evident that the essential part was not to make the student, through joint agreement, aware of his/her need (compare Fessler) but that 1) both parties started to need each other and 2) to receive something from one another. Thus we have created common ground for the images of both parties. In fact, this can be seen happening already at the playground, where children receive inspiration from one another. They play together, although they continue their work and may share it. Winnicot refers to this as a potential state. Ogden (1994) speaks of the analytic 'third' (see figure 5).

Creating the theory of supervision using 'the third one'

The analytic third is a form of experience participated in by the student-teacher and supervisor and at the same time a form of experiencing oneness (subjectivity). Through this experience both parties change into someone else. The supervisor does not experience the student teacher's past but his/her own creation of the student teacher's past in his/her experience of the analytic third. Similarly the student teacher experiences his/her own past as created intersubjectively in the third.

The dialectical relationship between people means that analytic dialogue and process creates a **new role** out of the elements of the dialectic of the subject and object, not only conscious negotiation, as Fessler et all proposed. The student must be the subject of analytic inquiry and in that inquiry simply the observing subject since his/her subjective experience is the only possible avenue through which to gain knowledge about the relatioship he/she is attempting to understand.

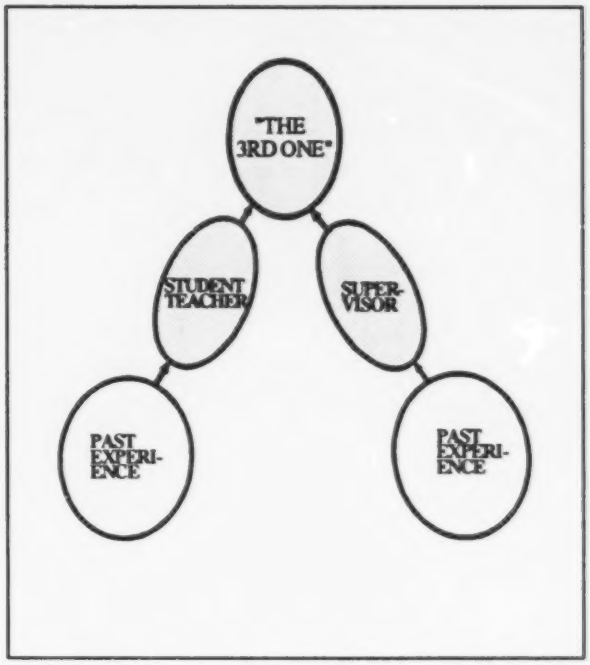

Figure 5. The joint creativity of the supervisor and the student in the form of the 3rd person

The difference in transferences

When both parties engage in a relationship on the basis of their histories, transferences are present and affect the nature of the realtionship. They need to be recognized and noticed. Otherwise the relationship is perceived as symmetrical, although it actually is an asymmetrical transference relationship. The supervisor does not attempt to engage the student teacher into theraphy but reacts in a fashion that rekindles the earlier discontinued relationship. - This is possible, if the supervisor resorts to the 'holding' and 'container' functions, i.e. shifts the emphasis towards acknowledgement of the emotional level (compare Ojanen & Keski-Luopa, Opettaja (Teacher) magazine, 1995).

The student teacher contributes his/her own transference via projective identification, to which the supervisor should react as described above. This enables a secure relationship, with the help of which the student teacher starts a professional development process. This a detour compared to Fessler's model of conscious negotiation, yet we believe it leads to a more successful result. Here the supervisor truly serves as a mediating agent.

Conclusions

We do not agree that individual professional growth can be consciously designed, as Fessler seems to suppose, it happens, because both of the participants cannot be conscious of those internal conflicts, which the repetition of the new experiential material may awake in the

supervisee. Conflict will arise in the mind of the student (supervisee) if mutual inconcistency (collision) of the new and old materia exists. This conflict causes anxiety and at the same time the resistance towards the learning of the new knowledge, because the giving up of the old awakes uncertainty and insecurity. Here is the critical point of growth, in which the supervisee needs the support of the supervisor in order to inquire in his/her mind about the conflict which has been created. In this way it is possible to bridge the resistance (construct a bridge).

The critical points of growth can not be assessed beforehand, because they will be found here and now, when the experience awakens the anxiety at a critical point. The reacting of this critical point requires in the supervisor certain capability to support the supervisee as long as he/she needs time to inquire the conflict behind the anxiety. The supervisor acts as a temporary container (container function in literature). This means that at this critical point of the growth the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee is not equal, but asymmetrical. Thus the supervisor settles down to be used by the supervisee, as a development object, i.e. as such a partner, which the student needs in order to win his/her own obstacles, in his/her mind. This way the role of the supervisor at this point is that of a remover of the obstacles and through that a role of a facilitator (facilitator giving possibilities). The development will start spontaneously and automatically in the supervisee when the obstacles are cleared up.

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